



The Rittenhouse Society Newsletter

Dav. Rittenhouse

"Bringing Us Closer Together"

Summer 1989

Volume 1, No. 2

*You're Invited
to the Annual Meeting of the
Rittenhouse Society*

*Vista International Hotel
Pittsburgh, Penna.*

Saturday, August 12, 1989

8 o'clock in the morning

*"Dutch treat" Breakfast
Spouses are Welcome!*

We will meet in the Hotel Lobby

Dear Friends,

First I would like to thank all of you who wrote me expressing your views and suggestions for a new and progressive Society. I love to receive mail...so keep those letters coming.

I also appreciate those words of encouragement on the first issue of the *Rittenhouse Society Newsletter*. It's only through your help that I can continue to keep us informed and enlightened.

Unfortunately though, I did not receive any information relating to the past history of our Society. I would like to encourage all of you to go into your files and send me copies of whatever you have. Better yet, bring them to our annual meeting.

I apologize for the delay in sending this issue out. It has been quite busy in the Whitford household with the arrival of our 5th bundle of joy - Jessica Mae on June 3rd.

There is plenty to review, digest and consider in this pre-ANA issue.

The Annual Meeting of the Rittenhouse Society is scheduled for Saturday, August 12, 1989 at 8:00 AM at the convention hotel restaurant. You and your spouse are invited to this "Dutch treat" breakfast.

See you in Pittsburgh,

Craig A. Whitford
Secretary/Treasurer

NEW MEMBERS PROPOSED

Mark S. Auerbach

proposed by Ron Guth

Neil Shafer

proposed by Dave Bowers & Ken Bressett

AN UPDATE....from the last issue of the Rittenhouse Society Newsletter

In regards to the six ideas suggested in the last issue, the following responses were received from the membership.

1. THE RITTENHOUSE AWARD(S).

It was the general consensus of those responding that we should activate the "Rittenhouse Award." This award would be given to the A.N.A. exhibit which displays the most original research. A second award would be provided annually for the book or article which puts forth the most original research.

2. ANS COAC CONFERENCE IDEA.

This idea brought mixed reactions as to whether this was too energetic for our Society.

3. PROMOTE NEW AUTHORS.

This idea was well received. The big question was HOW?

4. "THE PAPERS OF DAVID RITTENHOUSE"

It was suggested that this project was also perhaps beyond our reach.

5. SPECIAL U.S. MINT BICENTENNIAL PROJECTS.

Another very well received idea. Several suggestions have been offered and are published within.

6. Compilation of Books and Articles relating to the U.S. Mint.

Again perhaps beyond our reach.

MEMBERSHIP BADGE UPDATE

The idea of an elongate membership badge produced mixed reviews. Two further ideas were offered by members and are perhaps better suited for our Society. The following ideas are proposed for discussion at our annual meeting.

1. U.S. MINT RITTENHOUSE MEDAL.

Acquire a sufficient quantity of the U.S. Mint Rittenhouse Medal, grind off the reverse and engrave with the name of the Society, name of the member and year entered into the Society. This medal would then be drilled and tapped with a hanger for suspension from a ribbon and nameplate.

2. OUR OWN MEDAL.

Since tremendous support was voiced concerning the establishment of an annual Rittenhouse Awards, the idea of producing a Society Medal was proposed. This idea could serve the needs of our Society in several ways:

- A) **An Official Membership Badge.** Perhaps a quantity could be struck in a precious metal, specifically for the membership badge.
- B) **A Society Fund Raising Project.** A Society Medal produced in a limited edition (or unlimited) would allow us the opportunity to raise some of the funds necessary to carry out the goals of our Society.
- C) **Rittenhouse Awards.** Uniface examples could be struck for attachment to award plaques.

Please give some thought to these and any other ideas which you may have regarding our official membership medal and badge.

A SUGGESTED RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY PROJECT FOR 1992

"MINT MARKERS"

By Ken Bressett

The opportunity for our Society to do something significant to mark the bicentennial of the United States Mint is too important to be put off or missed. The items presented for consideration in the last newsletter all have merit, and give rise to a project that I would like to suggest where we could participate and bring some recognition to the Society.

I have already proposed to the American Numismatic Association that as part of their Centennial celebration in 1991, they could identify and mark the various mints that operated in this country from 1652 to 1852. In other words from the Colonial period through the Territorial issues.

Some of these historic mints already have markers to identify their location, but most do not as far as I can tell. Perhaps some, like the Hull mint in Boston, simply cannot be located today. But if it can it deserves a marker.

The ANA feels that they can only assist in suggesting that the project be carried out by local coin clubs or historical societies. They cannot fund the project or even provide the markers. In fact they do not know what mints to honor or where they are located. This is where the Rittenhouse Society can help. We can produce a list of the mint sites that should be marked, and try to establish the location. Perhaps we can also design a marker that would be similar for each mint, and that would recognize the ANA and Rittenhouse Society for their participation. Perhaps we could even find a way to raise some money for the project.

What are your thoughts on the subject? Can we as a Society work to produce a list of mints that should be marked along with a list of those currently marked?

MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR A PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY

By Dick Johnson

1. Commission a Documentary Film on Early Mint History.

While costly, this would appeal to today's film oriented society; it is also something that can be shown at coin functions, on TV, and even sold in video cassette form.

I would recommend the Wolper firm which did such an excellent film on Augustus Saint-Gaudens recently.

2. Form a "Friends of the United States Mint Society."

It seems every local library now has a "Friends of the..." organization which aids the group in diverse ways. Often this is aid in which the bureaucracy cannot move enough (or cannot move at all). There are things we could do for the U.S. Mint which it cannot do for itself (see next item, for example). *Continued On Page 4*

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3. Help Merchandise the U.S. Mint Bicentennial Event.

There is a growing trend for non-government organizations developing funds for government activities. Like the Inaugural Committee that raises \$10-\$12 million for the inauguration of each new president. These funds are raised (don't be surprised!) by selling products! Some of the top manufacturers in America become involved in these projects.

Perhaps the same thing could be done for the Mint (and I see now that the Mint is trying to raise an "enterprise fund" for a similar function).

There is a firm here in Connecticut which does this type of work for non-profit organizations. Basically it creates the products, prepares the catalog, and sees that it is mailed to the organization's own mailing list.

The Mint is blessed with one of the best mailing lists in the field. If we could help develop a line of products for the Bicentennial anniversary, and this catalog is mailed to the Mint's list, this would be a sure winner. Both in products and in sales.

Could you see Tiffany creating a bowl in silver honoring the U.S. Mint? Can you see the National Geographic creating a 4-color book on the history of the Mint? Can you see Time-Life-Warner creating a newsstand publication?

Can you think of a product or firm which would like to be connected with this project?

4. Our own Publications.

I have one in hand for possible publication. This very scarce 3-part article published in the *Philadelphia Dispatch* in January and February 1853. It is a 15,000 word visit to the Mint and explains every department and every function within the Mint at that time. It is one of the best descriptions during that period I have read.

I have never seen any reference to it; yet it is outstanding for its clarity and detail. It should be made available to numismatic readers of the next century.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT....Where do we go from here?

This issue puts forth many new and innovative ideas with which our Society can grow. Perhaps for the first time since the Society was formed we have the means to actively communicate with one another.

The organizational letter published in the last issue of this newsletter stated that the "General purpose of the Society is the encouragement and recognition of numismatic research and knowledge." This single statement requires action.

Our purpose is quite clear. What remains unclear is how we will make it all happen. What are our membership requirements? How would we reject a member felt to be unsuited? Is writing or authorship necessary to be a member? Should we have membership dues? What are or should be our goals? Should our Society become much larger in terms of membership?

All of these questions have been raised by several members and discussion and action is required before we can proceed with our goals.

One member wrote that "We have a pool of talent among our members that is unmatched in American numismatics today. We should put this talent to good use..."

We should put this talent to good use. As a Society we have the opportunity to make our goals happen. Before our annual meeting, please give some time and thought to our Society. Our purpose and goals need your input. We need to answer the question of "Where do we go from Here?"